



# Shinnecock people fight for land in playground of 1%

By Zola Fish

Before Europeans arrived, the Shinnecock people occupied a 146-mile ancestral territory, which included oceanfront, bays, sounds, marshes, creeks, salt meadows, forests and grasslands, in what is now called Long Island, N.Y.

The Shinnecock world began to change in 1640, when village leaders permitted English colonists to share a portion of their lands in exchange for 60 cloth coats, 60 bushels of corn and the promise of military protection.

The English considered the agreement a land sale, memorializing it in a “deed” that transferred to themselves a swath of Indigenous territory upon which they established Southampton.

The land appropriation continued in 1703, when the nation relinquished territory to Southampton in return for a 1,000-year lease of 3,500 acres. This included the Shinnecock Hills, now home of the ultra-exclusive Shinnecock Hills Golf Club.

And in 1859, the New York legislature approved a shady deal that abrogated the 1703 lease, returned the Shinnecock Hills to Southampton and restored the peninsula known as Shinnecock Neck to the tribe. The transaction, long considered fraudulent by the Shinnecock, reduced the tribe’s land base to its present size — approximately 800 acres for 1,200 enrolled members.

Increasingly bereft of land, Shinnecock tribal members were forced to find employment in the colonial economy. Women became domestic servants in non-Native households, and men worked as farm laborers and as whalers who harvested their quarry close to shore. (Shinnecock means “people of the shore.”)

Later, the tribe had to fight to stop pollution and pesticides from killing off



In January 2020, members of the Shinnecock nation protested outside a construction site on Montauk Highway in Southampton, N.Y.

their main source of food, the sealife at their shorelines and all bodies of water. The settlers sprayed to kill mosquitos. But the fish ate the mosquitos — no mosquitos, no fish, Natives starve.

The pollution got so bad that in 2012, hundreds of dead crabs washed ashore on Shinnecock land.

The Hamptons has become a playground for the 1%. Meanwhile 60%-70% of Shinnecock people live below the poverty level. Many celebrities live on Shinnecock land, including Anderson Cooper, Robert De Niro, Christie Brinkley, Alec Baldwin, Neil Patrick Harris, Beyonce and Jay Z, to name a few.

Traditionally, the Shinnecock were a fishing community and caught scallops and clams. Heddy Creek was closed to them and they had to fight for fishing rights that were actually theirs by birthright. Now the fish that do swim the waters are undersized and the scallops and clams are hard to find as their numbers have dwindled.

The Shinnecock’s most recent struggle is an issue concerning the ancestors. The 1% continue to build on Shinnecock land. As they dig up ground for their swimming pools, they are unearthing entire skeletons. The wealthy see it as a land issue, while the Shinnecock see digging up ancestors as the worst thing a person can do.

Lawsuits are ongoing. The bottom line is that the Shinnecock deserve their land back.

The Shinnecock made a wonderful documentary titled “Conscience Point,” a moving look at their lives on the peninsula, by Treva Wurmfeld (producer, writer, director and editor), Julianna Brannum (a Comanche producer and documentary filmmaker) and Alli Hunter Joseph (a Shinnecock journalist and producer). This project is proof that women know how to make movies.

The struggle of the Shinnecock continues, fighting for the return of their ancestral land.

*Zola Fish is a member of the Choctaw Nation and writes for Struggle-La-Lucha.org*

# NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING 2021

Cole’s Hill, Plymouth, Mass  
(HILL ABOVE PLYMOUTH ROCK)

Thursday  
NOV 25  
12 NOON



## SO LONG, COLUMBUS: Boston proclaims Indigenous Peoples Day

By United American Indians of New England

Oct. 6 – The Acting Mayor of Boston, Kim Janey, has today signed an Executive Order declaring that the second Monday in October will be Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Boston, replacing Columbus Day and setting out a roadmap for future administrations to improve relations with Indigenous tribes and organizations.

Boston Mayor Janey has listened to Indigenous people and taken action today. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day on the second Monday in October is necessary to bring awareness of the true history of Columbus and to honor the Indigenous history of the Americas and Boston as well as the Indigenous peoples who continue to live and work in and contribute to the City of Boston.

Elizabeth Solomon of the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag remarked: “The people of the Massachusetts Tribe have been a part of what is now called Boston for over 10,000 years. For far too long, the Indigenous history of this place has been obscured, and frequently erased, by the histories, myths and priorities of the dominant culture.

“We are happy to see the City of Boston take the important step of recognizing and celebrating Indigenous peoples in Boston, the Americas and around the world. Many thanks to Mayor Janey

and the many members of her administration who worked with the Indigenous community to make this happen.”

Kimimilasha James, an Aquinnah Wampanoag youth leader with United American Indians of New England (UAINE), said: “As someone who was born in Boston but never felt that Indigenous people were welcomed by the city government, I am very happy about Mayor Janey’s actions today. Indigenous Peoples Day brings a positive message about Indigenous survival and resilience in the face of genocidal actions directed against Indigenous peoples since 1492. It’s a day to learn about and celebrate Indigenous history and contemporary Indigenous peoples and cultures.

“And it is just a first step for the city to begin to build relationships with Indigenous people and begin to address the many injustices faced by Indigenous people here in Boston and elsewhere. It is time for us to stop being largely ignored and erased.”

Gloria Colon, outreach coordinator for the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB), said: “As a First Nation Migmaw mother, I am pleased that the City of Boston is honoring Indigenous Peoples Day. Growing up in Dorchester I experienced racism, I was targeted just for being Indigenous. While our city still has work to do to make all

*Continued inside*



Abuse of Indigenous children demands reparations, sovereignty

Shinnecock people fight for land in playground of 1%

See more on Day of Mourning



## NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING 2021

Cole’s Hill, Plymouth, MA (hill above Plymouth Rock)

Solidarity with Indigenous struggle throughout the world. We welcome all our relations crossed by the U.S. border and ICE.

Look for updates at UAINE facebook group at [Facebook.com/groups/UAINE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UAINE) E-mail: [info@uaine.org](mailto:info@uaine.org) Website: [Uaine.org](https://www.Uaine.org)

Thurs. Nov. 25 – 12 noon

Labor donated 10/21



# Abuse of Indigenous children

By Mahtowin Munro

*From a talk given at an Orange Shirt Day 2021 commemoration in Boston on Sept. 30.*

Orange Shirt Day has been commemorated in Canada since 2013, to honor the survivors and remember the children who never made it home from the Indian residential schools.

The Sept. 30 date was chosen because it is the time of year when children were forced to go into the residential schools. The orange shirt symbolism came about when Phyllis Webstad told her story of her first day at residential school in the 1970s, when her shiny new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her as a 6-year-old girl as she was violently stripped of her clothing and belongings.

Today is also the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, although some provinces are refusing to honor it and there are too many Indigenous people saying they cannot even get the day off from work. Indigenous peoples have long been speaking the truth, and it is long overdue for settlers and newcomers to listen to that truth.

But honestly, there can be no reconciliation until reparations are made, Indigenous sovereignty is respected, Indigenous rights to consent and refuse are respected. Landback efforts and the right to decolonize need to be respected by Canada, a country that has still not changed its anti-Indigenous behavior or improved often deplorable conditions for Indigenous people, especially children. Apologies without actions do not mean anything.

More than 6,500 children have been found in unmarked graves on residential school grounds this year alone. They were not suddenly “discovered.” The survivors knew and testified about this. As children, some of the survivors were even forced to work on digging the graves.

One of the 2015 recommendations of the Canadian Truth & Reconciliation Commission was that Canada fund and help Indigenous communities identify graves at

the residential schools and reclaim their lost children. But Canada did nothing.

At least 150,000 Indigenous children were placed in the Canadian Indian residential school system. Some people now are referring to them as Institutions of Assimilation and Genocide, since that was the intent of the programs. And schools should not have graves full of children either, should they?

## Genocide of Indigenous children

The residential schools were created to alienate Indigenous children from their communities, spiritualities, cultures, languages and homelands. This genocide of children was an overt effort to destroy Indigenous family systems and remove Indigenous peoples from their lands. Mounties would raid some communities to snatch up all the children and take them away.

In some schools, the children were not allowed to go home at all for years, and families were prevented from visiting them. Even preschool-aged children were in these schools and died there. Children died of malnutrition, tuberculosis, heartbreak, abuse, medical experimentation and more. Families were often not even told that their child had died, and their bodies were often not brought home. All of this resulted in profound intergenerational trauma.

The number of school-related deaths in Canada remains unknown due to incomplete records. Estimates now range from several thousand to over 30,000. Indigenous communities are urgently trying to raise funds to bring in specialists to examine the land and find graves at residential schools.

Many of the schools were run by the Catholic Church. One of the demands today is that the Catholic Church and its prelates not only apologize, but release all of its records, hand over the priests and nuns who did this to children, pay reparations out of its vast wealth, and take concrete actions to repair relationships with Indigenous peoples.

It's only now, after this year's revelation of thousands of unmarked graves of children, that more Canadians are finally

listening to what has happened to Indigenous people in North America. Even now, there remain some genocide deniers who tell Indigenous people to get over it.

## U.S. also stole children

Today is also a National Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding Schools.

Between 1869 and the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Native American and Alaska Native children were removed from their homes and families and placed in boarding schools operated by the U.S. government and churches, including the Catholic Church and several protestant denominations.

Though we don't know how many children were taken in total, by 1900 there were 20,000 children in Indian boarding schools, and by 1925 more than 60,000. The Native children who were removed from their homes, families and communities during this time were taken to schools sometimes thousands of miles away, where they were punished for speaking their native languages, stripped of traditional clothing and had their hair chopped off. They suffered physical, sexual, cultural and spiritual abuse, neglect and torture.

Many children never returned home and their fates have yet to be accounted for by the U.S. government, although U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland has recently promised that there will be a thorough investigation.

Both countries also had a long history of removing Indigenous children from their homes and placing them with white families to be adopted and assimilated and lose their ties to their communities, a practice that went on for decades and resulted in children we call “lost birds” because they grew up not knowing where they belong.

As a result, Indigenous people worked very hard to get laws such as the Indian Child Welfare Act passed so that this practice would end forever. Unfortunately, right-wing forces in recent years have been trying to overturn the Indian Child Welfare Act so that more of our children will be stolen and adopted by whites, and the future of ICWA will soon be determined by the Supreme Court.

# demands reparations, sovereignty

In both Canada and the U.S., Indigenous children are disproportionately taken from their families and put into foster care, at least four times more often than white kids. This has led some people to say that foster care has in effect become the new residential school system.

*The writer is a leader of United American Indians of New England (UAINE), which hosts the annual National Day of Mourning commemoration in Plymouth, Mass., on the last Thursday of November. For more info, visit UAINE.org.*



Orange Shirt Day commemoration at the Federal Building in Boston, Sept. 30.

## Boston declares Indigenous People's Day

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people safe, it is important that Indigenous children are appreciated and included.”

Mahtowin Munro (Lakota) from United American Indians of New England and the statewide Indigenous Peoples Day campaign (IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org) said, “We have been working for several years to get Boston to properly acknowledge and be in relationship with Indigenous nations and people here.”

She continued: “We wish to thank Mayor Janey and her staff for listening to the concerns of Indigenous people in the city and for her expressed commitment to Indigenous sovereignty and racial justice for Indigenous peoples in the Boston area. She and her staff have set an example as well by thoughtfully consulting and considering future steps that need to be taken by the city. We are elated that she has declared Oct. 11, 2021, to be Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Boston.”

Raquel Halsey, member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation and executive

director of NAICOB, said: “I'm so proud to have a mayor who listens to the community and works to make Boston an inclusive city. As a service provider, we have heard countless stories of Indigenous people feeling unwelcome in Boston, and they have felt the lasting consequences of genocide and colonialism every day.

“Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day is an important step toward addressing the lived experiences of many residents and building trust between municipalities and Indigenous nations.”

Jean-Luc Pierite, member of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, president of NAICOB and member of the executive committee of the Black Mass. Coalition, said: “We must commend the tribal leaders, Indigenous activists and the City of Boston's internal working group for their dedication towards the action steps to enable the health and wellness of our community members. NAICOB, following our over 50-year tradition and commitment to the New England Native American community, looks forward

to being a partner in ensuring improved government-to-government relationships.”

For decades, Indigenous people have been calling for an end to the public celebration of Christopher Columbus. They have also asked that Indigenous Peoples Day, a day to honor Indigenous peoples from throughout the Americas, replace Columbus Day on the second Monday in October because of the date's significance. They consider it a first step toward recognizing the genocide of millions of Indigenous people and the theft of their lands that began with the arrival of Columbus. It is a meaningful symbolic gesture in addressing the pain caused to Native peoples by the many years of public celebrations of Columbus as a hero.

An increasing number of towns, cities and states around the U.S. are now celebrating Indigenous peoples instead of Columbus on this day.

Mayor Janey also acknowledged that Boston is located on the land of the Massachusetts Tribe. 📍

Articles reprinted from Struggle-La-Lucha.org

## NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING 2021

Cole's Hill, Plymouth, MA (hill above Plymouth Rock)

Join us as we continue to create a true awareness of Native peoples and history. Help shatter the untrue image of Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, sexism, homophobia and the profit-driven destruction of Earth that they and other European settlers introduced to these shores. Masks Up, Mayflowers Down!

📍Thurs. Nov. 25 – 12 noon

Check the UAINE facebook group at [Facebook.com/groups/UAINE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UAINE) for updates.

E-mail: [info@uaine.org](mailto:info@uaine.org)

Website: [Uaine.org](https://www.uaine.org)